



JAMIE RASKIN
CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
8TH DISTRICT, MARYLAND

October 30, 2020

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As the Representative of Maryland's 8th District, which is home to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), I am compelled to write because of a recent offensive you seem to have unleashed against NOAA, its scientists and its essential work on climate change.

Why are you installing anti-scientific political hacks in key leadership roles at NOAA? Have you not done enough damage to our nation and our world?

From the looks of it, your new appointees have been dispatched to NOAA for the primary purpose of thwarting its scientific research, the essential work of the agency, and especially the forthcoming Fifth National Climate Assessment (NCA5).¹ You may not know that NOAA is a world leader in climate science research but someone in the White House apparently knows that it serves as the lead agency for preparing this climate assessment report. It is critical that NOAA's scientists and civil servants be able to complete their work without experiencing coercive political pressure to censor, ignore or distort their scientific findings. **I urge you to respect NOAA's longstanding scientific integrity policy and stop interfering with the objective scientific methods and principles that guide development of the National Climate Assessment.**

The National Climate Assessment is the most authoritative and comprehensive report on the earth's changing climate and informs many of our most critical environmental, public health, and national security policy decisions. Private and non-profit sector decision-makers draw upon the report's findings to prepare for climate-related risks and develop their adaptation plans. The 2018 National Climate Assessment concluded that human activities are the dominant cause of a warming climate,² although we know your administration has repeatedly rejected these findings and has now installed unqualified political loyalists in senior roles at NOAA who are reportedly disrupting the critical work of the agency.³

I object to your engineering of these recent hostile policy and personnel changes at NOAA. The New York Times reported that NOAA's acting chief scientist Craig McLean was removed from his role after asking the incoming political staff "to acknowledge the agency's scientific integrity

¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/27/climate/trump-election-climate-noaa.html>

² https://nca2018.globalchange.gov/downloads/NCA4_2018_FullReport.pdf

³ <https://www.eenews.net/climatewire/stories/1063715433>

policy, which prohibits manipulating research or presenting ideologically driven findings.”⁴ I am alarmed also by a new policy that requires NOAA officials to obtain approval from political staff three days prior to sending any communications such as social media posts and agencywide emails.⁵ This absurd policy apparently extends to even the NOAA administrator, who cannot send “messages to his own staff members without having them cleared” by political staff.⁶ These controls intensify a stifling ideological environment at NOAA where more than a hundred scientists have already reported censorship of use of the phrase “climate change” in their work.⁷ Your political staff are reportedly imposing new strictures on NOAA grant applications in the drive to put climate change research in a straitjacket. These actions to block climate science research and education pose a profound threat to public health and our environmental security as a nation.

Two years ago, the 4th National Climate Assessment warned that current efforts to restrain climate change are not remotely sufficient “to avoid substantial damage to the U.S. economy, environment, and human health and well-being over the coming decades.”⁸ But rather than heeding scientific data and recommendations, you and your administration have waged war on the science, lied repeatedly about climate change, and turned America into an international environmental outlaw and pariah state.

Your compulsive lying about the science of COVID-19 and lethal incompetence and dereliction of duty in fighting the epidemic have shown the world clearly the devastating costs of your sadistic thinking and sinister exploitation of your followers’ cultish faith in your powers. With climate change, neither our nation nor the world can afford a repeat of your abject surrender to an invisible natural enemy.

I urge you, as long as you continue to hold public office, to end your dangerous attacks on science and, specifically, scientific integrity in the process of drafting and developing the NCA5. Thank you for your attention to this fateful matter and I look forward to your response.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jamie Raskin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress

CC: Wilbur Ross, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Commerce

⁴ <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/27/climate/trump-election-climate-noaa.html>

⁵ <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/27/climate/trump-election-climate-noaa.html>

⁶ <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/27/climate/trump-election-climate-noaa.html>

⁷ <https://ucsusa.org/sites/default/files/2019-09/science-under-trump-noaa.pdf>

⁸ <https://nca2018.globalchange.gov/>